

ACT ONE

VT: SERIES OF SWEEPING SHOTS OF FAMOUS LANDMARKS

We see shots of famous political images -- the Capitol Building, floor of the Senate, a recent Presidential inauguration, the White House, Mount Rushmore, etc.

LESLIE (V.O.)
I love politics. I've always loved
politics. "The game."

B-Roll: SLOW PAN OVER some BOOKSHELVES. Nothing but
Political biographies.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Some people say that politics is show
business for ugly people. I disagree.
It's show business for real people --
people whose talents aren't dancing and
singing, but rather talking and talking.

INT. LESLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

ANGLE ON: a framed copy of the Constitution...a portrait of
Thomas Jefferson...

LESLIE (V.O.)
I just...I love the majesty of the
political system. I live for it. I
would say that my greatest dream is to be
elected President of the United States of
America.

REVEAL: LESLIE (AMY POEHLER)

In her office, she is framed by an American flag, and a flag
of the state of Indiana. A nameplate on the desk reads
"Leslie Knope." She's wearing a beige pantsuit.

LESLIE
My name is Leslie Knope. And I am the
Deputy Chairwoman of the Department of
Parks and Recreation in the city of
Pawnee, Indiana.

Camera widens to see that her office is small and cramped,
and not all that impressive.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Can you get wide enough to see the flag?

We widen further to see that there is another desk in her
room, with a piece of another guy (TOM) typing at something.

INT. PARKS DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM

RON SWANSON, 40s, midwestern, leads a meeting of the Parks Department. LESLIE, TOM (Aziz Ansari), and various OTHERS.

RON

Internal Auditing wants to remind all government employees that any gift given by a member of the public valued at over \$25 has to be reported immediately.

One employee looks a little worried.

EMPLOYEE

Ron, what about, like, a gift certificate? Would that count?

RON

How much?

EMPLOYEE

Two hundred dollars.

RON

(yes, dummy)
...Yes. That would count. You can't win, just report it and add to the endless red tape.

LESLIE

Of course report it!
(off their looks)
It's the smart play. The last thing we need is the press breathing down our neck. Am I right, Ron? I am agreeing with you.

People stare at her. Ron sighs.

RON

Lastly, tonight is the Community Outreach Public Forum. Leslie's gonna run it.

She grins.

RON (CONT'D)

We need one more. Who wants in?

No one volunteers.

RON (CONT'D)

Tom.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

3.
10/24/08

TOM
Ugh. Fine.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE
Every month the city government holds a
public forum and every month, out of over
600 city workers, I'm the one they send.
(shrugging)
It's pretty cool. Whatever. No big
deal. Just an honor.

RON TALKING HEAD

RON
No one else wants to do it. It's a
terrible job, going to some dingy rec
center and getting yelled at by the
public. I hate the public. The public
is stupid.

EXT. EST. EMERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Some people drift towards the door.

CLOSE ON: Sandwich board reading:

Pawnee City PUBLIC FORUM.

7:30 PM, Auditorium

Free and Open to the Public

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Leslie and Tom are in a SCHOOL HALLWAY outside an AUDITORIUM.

LESLIE
(to camera)
This'll be really good for you guys to
see. This is where the rubber of
government meets the road of actual human
beings. When I go through those doors, I
have to be on, like the White House Press
Secretary. So. Deep breath.
(she takes one)
Let's rock and roll.

Leslie tries the DOOR. It's LOCKED. She jiggles it many
times. Locked. Beat. Tom snickers and points at her.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Colorful children's ART hangs on the walls. Leslie and Tom each have an (unnecessary, now that they're in a small room) MICROPHONE, like in a Senate hearing.

About 40 of those little chair-desk combo seats are filled with people, and more stand along the walls -- mostly elderly, all races. Among them is ANN (late 20's, pretty without trying).

Leslie finishes writing her NAME and TITLE on the blackboard.

LESLIE

Thank you all for coming. My name is
Parks Department Deputy Chairwoman Leslie
Knope.

She casually sits on the edge of one of the tiny desks and TIPS OVER. She recovers, and sits on the teacher's desk.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

With me today is department member Tom
Haverford.

Tom notices with irritation people's confused faces.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

Yes, when I was 18 I changed my name from
Aziz Abdul Al'Rahman to Tom Haverford.
The cold hard fact is that dark-skinned
people with funny-sounding Muslim names
just don't make it very far in politics.

(jump cut)

Yes, okay, fine, Barack Obama. Why does
everyone always bring up Barack Obama?
That's one counter-example!

BACK TO SCENE

Leslie holds court.

LESLIE (V.O.)

And yes, I do call myself a "Deputy
Chairwoman." Politics is changing in
this country -- it's not just a boys club
anymore. There are 18 million cracks in
the glass ceiling, thanks to people like
me, and Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin,
and, um... Margaret Thatcher. And Nancy
Pelosi. The Parks Department is the site
of another one of those cracks.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And over the course of my political career, I intend to go around making thousands of more cracks in things, if not outright shattering and destroying them.

She smiles broadly.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Big turnout tonight! Very exciting.

We see the front row is mostly old people and weirdos.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

So fire away! Yes?

Ann raises her hand. A MAN stands aggressively and starts talking.

MAN

I am here because of a crime that is happening right now all over this city, that you people know about and do nothing to stop.

LESLIE

That's horrible.

MAN

Will you commit right now to helping me stop this crime?

LESLIE

Absolutely. We want to serve you in any way we can.

Tom shakes his head in disgust at her naivete.

MAN

Do you want me to tell you what the crime is?

LESLIE

Yes. Please, tell me, so I can help you stop it. I don't understand why you're being so mysterious about this.

MAN

It's abortion.

Leslie winces, glances to camera, embarrassed.

TOM

Abortion's legal, dude.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

You promised to stop it.
(holds up mini recorder)
I have it on tape!

LESLIE

Sir, first of all, that was a really mean trap. But more importantly, the city government doesn't have the ability to overturn a Supreme Court decision--

MAN

I think you could, if you weren't so lazy. Mayor Havlicek could.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

Mayor Havlicek was mayor when I was a kid. He was quite an old-school character.

B roll: photo of brutal-looking man in a suit.

LESLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He might have been able to overturn a Supreme Court ruling. He died in a small plane accident when he was thrown out in handcuffs at 20,000 feet.

Widen to reveal the picture is on the front page of the Pawnee Journal, with headline: Mayor Meets Grisly End.

BACK TO SCENE

He sits. Leslie gathers herself. Ann still has her hand up.

ANN

Um...I have --

Another MAN stands.

OTHER MAN

When they gonna open up Ramsett Park again? It's been closed for a year.

LESLIE

Yes, we are trying hard to get that park reopened. There was a new problem recently...what was it, Tom?

TOM

Angry dogs.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE

Dogs. That's right. There was a pack of scary dogs who were attacking the park workers, and we said, unh unh. Read our lips. "Dogs can't bite people!"

Leslie glances around to see how her tough-talking is received. The old people stare impassively like cows.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

So we are looking into the problem.
(she makes a note)
Who's next?

Ann waves her hand frantically.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Yes, Barry, go ahead.

A 50-ish WEIRDO, BARRY, stands up, very animated and inexplicably super sarcastic.

BARRY

Well, well, well -- today is a great day! Because last month they put me in jail. That's right! And my mother had a restaurant in this town. A creamery. The head of the police is a ninth degree mason.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

There are a few regulars who always show up to our meetings and ramble on about stuff. Leslie says we should listen to them like we'd listen to anyone else. I prefer: mocking them.

BACK TO SCENE

Close on Tom, snickering as he listens to Barry's ramblings.

BARRY

One day there was a fire. And that's what killed my snake. Now I have a few things to say about Laura Linney.

LESLIE

Okay, Barry, thank you.

TOM

No, no, I want to hear what he has to say about Laura Linney.

(CONTINUED)

BARRY

Laura Linney is a fifteenth degree mason.
In the fifteenth degree they teach you
how to talk with your mouth closed.

LESLIE

Okay, thank you, Barry. Thank you for
your comments.

Tom starts CLAPPING sarcastically. He whistles.

TOM

I agree with a lot of what he said.

Barry wanders out the door. Leslie spins for camera.

LESLIE

This is valuable. Citizen comments.
Who's next?

Ann has her hand up. Another guy starts to get up and talk
and Ann just shouts it out.

ANN

Hi. So, I'm Ann Logan, and a few of us
are here to talk about the abandoned lot
on Sullivan Street.

LESLIE

Alright. Go on.

ANN

I'm a nurse, and frankly I'm not at all
interested in politics.

This gets some claps; Leslie looks insulted.

ANN (CONT'D)

But this thing almost killed my
boyfriend, so...

EXT. STREET - PAWNEE, INDIANA - MORNING - B-ROLL

This footage is shot on a different day -- the documentary
crew has followed Ann, after hearing her issue at the
meeting, and is splicing in this footage to illustrate what
she talked about.

We're on an unimpressive street full of shops with apartments
and small homes behind them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN (V.O.)

Anyway, on this lot near my house, a developer dug out a basement for an office building, and then they went bankrupt. And now, there's just...this giant pit.

We look over at a GIANT PIT, maybe 15 feet deep, dug out of the ground. It is surrounded by a construction fence that is rotting and busted down in places -- this has clearly been here for a while. Ann looks to camera and silently points out sections of the pit as we hear the conversation at the meeting continue.

ANN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It's been there almost a year.

LESLIE (V.O.)

Twelve months, yes, go on.

ANN (V.O.)

It goes right up to the backyard of the house I rent.

BACK TO MEETING SCENE

ANN

And my boyfriend -- who's a musician actually, who I support, but who was really starting to make some contacts and apply himself in the music business -- anyway, he was cutting through the lot at night, and it was raining, and he just -- whoomp! -- fell right in. Broke both his legs.

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Andy is on his couch, both his legs in a cast.

ANDY

It was slippery. Did she tell you it was slippery? Because it was super slippery.

BACK TO SCENE

ANN

There was a little item in the paper.

Ann holds up a clipping from a scrapbook.

(CONTINUED)

ANN (V.O.)(CONT'D)
"Unemployed man breaks legs in abandoned pit." Which -- why do they have to say "unemployed" man? That is inappropriate editorializing that doesn't belong in a news piece, in my opinion.

LESLIE
(shaking her head)
It's the gotcha media.

ANN
The point is, there's a giant hole in the ground and people are falling in. I've been trying for months to get someone to fix this problem -- I've written letters, and I've made like a thousand phone calls to the government, but so far...

She makes a zero with her fingers.

TOM
Who fell in again? Your boyfriend?

ANN
Yeah.

TOM
Is he dead?

ANN
No. But he broke his legs.

TOM
Uh huh. How long you guys been together?
Is it a strong relationship?

Ann looks at him a little warily.

TOM (CONT'D)
I'm not hitting on you. I'm married. I am only asking for background purposes.

MARGARET, a local woman with 4 boys, yells out:

MARGARET
We've been to the Revenue Collection department, and the Transportation Department, and the City Manager, and we keep hitting dead ends.

LESLIE
I'm sorry to hear that, but this doesn't seem like a government problem--

(CONTINUED)

ANN

Actually it is, because the government owns the land now. So you're going to have to figure out a different way to blow me off.

LOUD ANGRY APPLAUSE from the crowd. Leslie gathers herself.

LESLIE

Well, guess what? I'm not going to blow you off.

ANN

(unconvinced)

Really.

LESLIE

Yes. I will help you.

ANN

Is that a promise?

LESLIE

More than a promise. A pinky promise. I pinky promise all of you, right now, that I will help. And not only will we fill in that pit, but we will put a beautiful new park on that land.

The crowd is happy. Tom leans over, covering the mic with his hand.

TOM

What the hell are you doing?

Leslie covers her mic.

LESLIE

I'm getting in the game.

ANN TALKING HEAD

B-ROLL: The meeting breaking up, Leslie talking to Ann and giving her a business card and them chatting.

ANN

She claims she's going to help us. Whatever. Frankly she seems like kind of a boob.

(beat)

She wears pantyhose, and for some reason I imagine them going all the way up to her chin.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

B roll: Leslie staring nobly out her office window at the brick wall that serves as her "view."

LESLIE

I've been in the parks department for six years, and until now I've only really been able to engage in park maintenance. For example, last year I led the city-wide drive to disinfect the sandbox sand after those problems with the cats. I heard some testimony from mothers of toddlers that would make you cry. But this pit! The chance to build a new park, from scratch...

(she thinks)

This is my Hoover Dam.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

Tom is on the phone.

TOM

That sounds great. Problem is, anything over 25 dollars I have to report. So just call my wife and give her the suits and then if they don't fit her, maybe she'll give them to me.

Tom laughs a snarky little laugh. Leslie walks in.

LESLIE

Hey Tom.

TOM

(covering)

Alright Mr. Mayor. Nice talking with ya.

(turns to Leslie)

Leslie! Hello.

LESLIE

That was the mayor?

TOM

Yeah. We were just rapping about some things.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

Tom is so lucky. I need to make the acquaintance of the mayor.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

I swear to God she is the most gullible human being I've ever met in my life.

INT. LESLIE AND TOM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Leslie and Tom, brainstorming.

LESLIE

Brainstorm. How do I make this happen?

TOM

Go to the City Council directly, ask them to just front the money.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE

Nah, money's tight right now. Parks aren't a priority. I need more firepower. I need some bigger guns.

Tom looks at her chest and snickers.

TOM

Yeah. Your guns are pretty small.

LESLIE

Tell me about it.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

Tom and I work great together. We're both outsiders -- me as a woman, him as... whatever he is. I wanna say... Libyan? Plus he's the size of a child. Size twenty-eight waist. Plus he worships the prophet Mahomet.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

Tom Haverford -- c'mon, I'm Episcopalian. Three years now.

INT. LESLIE AND TOM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

LESLIE

Well, obviously, what I really need is to establish a committee.

(to camera)

Committees are power. They are the lifeblood of the democratic system.

(to Tom)

That was good. Did you get that? For the book?

Tom gets out a pen and paper.

TOM

Yup. Got it.

LESLIE

(to camera)

From time to time, I stumble upon a saying, or a phrase, that really sums up my feelings about things. Tom is helping me collect them, for my memoirs.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM
No I'm not.

BACK TO SCENE

CLOSE ON what Tom is writing -- it's just scribbles.

LESLIE
What if we got Mark on board?

TOM
Mark who?

LESLIE
"Mark who?!" Brendanawicz!

TOM
Oh. Sure. Whatever. Call him.

Leslie starts to dial.

LESLIE
(to camera)
You want something done in this town, you need Mark Brendanawicz. He's a city planner and he's "da bomb." Smart, capable, knows where all the bodies are buried. Just a great, solid, smart, big, strapping, solid guy.

Tom looks at her.

TOM
(to camera)
She wants to bone him so bad.

LESLIE
What?
(into phone)
Hey! Mark!

EXT. COURTYARD - LATER

This is an interior courtyard of the building. Crummy, run-down -- just a few benches and a piddling fountain. Leslie approaches Mark, who's eating a sandwich.

MARK
Hey Leslie.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE

What's up, Brendanawicz, you crazy ol'
Polack?

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

Politics is rough-and-tumble. Yes, I'm a
woman, but to fit in I sometimes have to
talk like a man, act like a man. You
have to dish it out and you have to take
it.

(she pinches her arm)
Thick skin.

BACK TO SCENE

MARK

"Crazy ol' Polack?" What the hell,
Leslie? That's really hurtful.

LESLIE

(crumbling)
Oh my God. Mark, I'm so sorry. I'm just
trying to kid around. Oh God. Oh God,
I've already screwed it all up.

MARK

Leslie. I'm kidding.

Leslie looks confused, and then laughs really loudly and
weirdly to try to recover.

LESLIE

What? Ha ha ha ha! I know. He he he
he! Oh man. Good times. Politics.

Mark smiles at her, bemused.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

So. Down to brass tacks. Do you know
this pit I'm talking about?

MARK

Yeah. Lot 48. I checked it out like a
month ago. It's pretty gross.

LESLIE

As in a gross injustice!

MARK

Okay, but what I meant was, it's
disgusting.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARK (CONT'D)

People have been tossing their garbage into it. And I'm pretty sure there was a dead wolf in one corner.

LESLIE

Let me ask you this -- do you think I could turn it into a park?

MARK

A park. Huh.

(beat)

Well, when I think about the logistics, and the various hoops you'd have to jump through, I'd say: is it likely? No. But is it possible? No. It's not possible. You should give up.

LESLIE

What? Why?

MARK

(annoyed, deep breath)

There's a million reasons why. I used to try to get stuff like this off the ground when I started, but between the developers and the citizen groups, the bureaucrats and the anti-government nuts...it's impossible.

LESLIE

So there's a chance.

MARK

...No. There isn't. Aim smaller, is my advice. Have the wolf removed. You might be able to pull that off before Christmas.

LESLIE

Mark, I need your help on this. I need you to support it.

She stares deeply into his eyes.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Can you do me a favor? For old time's sake?

He looks a tiny bit confused.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

Mark and I...it's complicated. You work closely with someone, two strong personalities, passionate about the same things, sharing a worldview...things can happen. We slept together.

She makes a motion like: there it is.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

A while ago. We didn't really talk about it much afterwards -- we're both professionals, and it doesn't affect our work. I don't know. Some day down the line, maybe we'll give it a chance to become something more. Who knows.

MARK TALKING HEAD

In his office.

MARK

Leslie? No.

(he thinks)

Oh my God -- wait -- yes, we did! Wow, I totally forgot about that. Yes. She's right. Like five years ago. After some kind of...party or something? I was pretty drunk. Anyway. Yeah. How about that.

BACK TO SCENE

She's still staring into his eyes.

MARK

Why do you care about this pit? What's your angle here?

LESLIE

No "angle." I've been here six years, I know more about our city and the government than anyone else, and I've never had my own project. It's not fair! It's like, we're back in school and I've studied really hard and they're not letting me take the test! Imagine how frustrating that would be.

Mark looks to camera.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

God if those tests had been called off, I would have been pissed. And those lousy snow days too. I hated those.

LESLIE

I know! Mark, I believe that government can do good things, but you need power, and getting this park made would give me power. The more power I can get, the more good I can do. If I had absolute power, I could do absolute good!

Mark smiles glumly at her sincerity.

MARK

Your enthusiasm is...intense, and off-putting--

LESLIE

Thank you.

MARK

But take it from me -- it's just not going to happen.

LESLIE

But I promised those people I would make this happen. I promised them in the meeting.

MARK

Well, you'll just have to accept that you will be the first bureaucrat in history to make a promise and fail to deliver on it.

He walks off. Leslie looks frustrated and determined until Mark is out of sight.

LESLIE

(suddenly)

Not me!

(to camera)

Why do I always think of the perfect response like one second too late?

INT. ANN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Andy watches TV with his broken legs up. He is swaddled in an old blanket and covered in snack wrappers. Ann is hustling around cleaning up the apartment.

(CONTINUED)

ANN

Can you just straighten up your area a little honey? They're going to be here soon.

ANDY

Sure.

He looks around, then picks up a TV GUIDE from the couch and tosses it on the ottoman. Ann sighs.

ANN

(to camera)

That parks lady is coming over, and we're going to see the pit. Probably just a photo op for her, I bet. I still think there's no way the government--

ANDY

Shhh.

ANN

Excuse me?

ANDY

C'mon, honey, if I wanted to watch the news I'd be watching the news.

ANN

I'm talking about the pit you fell in.

ANDY

But it's boring. That's why we have TV, take our minds off boring stuff like that.

ANN

Yeah, boring stuff. Like fixing problems. Dealing. Improving things.

ANDY

Yeah. Either one.

ANDY TALKING HEAD

ANDY

Here's the deal.

He checks behind him to see if Ann is around.

ANDY (CONT'D)

When Ann sees something broken, she feels obliged to fix it. I don't know why, and I don't really care.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDY (CONT'D)

It's the only reason I've eaten a hot
meal in the last three years.

BACK TO SCENE

The doorbell rings. Ann answers, and it's Leslie, Tom, and
AUBREY (20, bored). Leslie is wearing a YELLOW HARD HAT.

LESLIE

Hello, Ann.

ANN

Hey. Wow.

LESLIE

This is Tom Haverford, my loyal co-
worker. And this is Aubrey, our college
intern. She's going to document our fact-
finding mission.

Ann sees Aubrey's CAMERA and glances knowingly to camera.

ANN

Okay -- let me just get my purse...

Leslie pushes past her and heads to Andy.

LESLIE

This must be our hero. "The man heard
round the world." How you doing, son?

ANDY

...Hey.

LESLIE

On behalf of the government of Pawnee, I
want to say that we're going to do
everything we can to help you. Stay brave.

ANDY

Okay.

(beat)

Can you hand me that TV Guide?

INT. KITCHEN - SIMULTANEOUS

SPY SHOT: Tom and Ann. She's getting her things.

TOM

So, you're a nurse.

ANN

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Like, general nurse or some special kind?

ANN

General, but I get people ready for
imaging tests a lot, so that's my
specialty.

TOM

Do you have to shave a lot of wieners?

ANN

No.

Beat.

TOM

Sometimes when I brush my teeth there's
blood.

ANN

(sigh)

Well are you using a soft bristle
toothbrush?

TOM

Extra soft. Do I look like an idiot?

ANN

You should go to a doctor. You might
have cancer of the tooth enamel.

TOM

Oh god.

Leslie pokes her head in.

LESLIE

Let's go! Fact-finding mission!

EXT. PIT - LATER

The camera ranges over the pit and then finds our gang
peering in. They stare at it.

ANN

Right over there is where he fell in.

LESLIE

(hushed; dramatic)

My God. How did we let this happen?

She bends down in a kneel and surveys the scene. Squints.
Picks up some soil and rubs it in her fingers.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Soil. Unstable. Crumbly. This whole lot could be vulnerable to mudslides. Aubrey -- get some pictures of this.

AUBREY

Of what?

LESLIE

Everything. This whole thing.

Aubrey takes out her little digital camera and takes random photos of nothing.

ANN

So, you think we can fill it in, plant some grass, maybe a bench or a tree?

LESLIE

Possibly. But dream with me for a second: why shouldn't this neighborhood have a first class park? With a playground, for kids. Do you have kids?

TOM

(looking her up and down)
I'd say no.

ANN

...No.

LESLIE

Okay, but there are a lot of kids in the neighborhood, right? Kids that would love a shiny new playground, with swings and a softball field and a pool, and a jungle gym and tennis courts? And maybe over there: an amphitheater, for Shakespeare-in-the-Park.

ANN

It's not that big a pit.

LESLIE

Well, some of those things. Think about it! A little playground arises from the ashes of a deadly pit. We could name it after your boyfriend. "The Ann's Boyfriend Memorial Park."

ANN

He didn't die.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE
"The Boyfriend Broken Leg Tribute
Playground." It'll take a little extra
work, but why not try?

Ann shrugs her shoulders and smiles.

ANN
I think that would be great.

LESLIE
Good. Me too.
(beat)
I'm going in.

She steps to the edge of the pit.

ANN
Why?

LESLIE
I need to see it for myself. Don't
worry. I've got a hard hat on.

ANN
I see that.

Leslie starts down the side of the pit, slowly.

LESLIE
Aubrey -- document this.
(to camera)
The key to any fact-finding mission is
you have to really get into the battle
zone. Like a President surveying a
hurricane-ravaged town. Or when Richard
Nixon went to China, to see...you know,
what the Chinese were up to.

She's moving slowly down...

LESLIE (CONT'D)
A politician can't be effective if she
doesn't see the problem first-hand. You
have to --

Her HEEL CATCHES --

She TUMBLES DOWN --

LESLIE (CONT'D)
(bleeped, obviously)
Fuck! Ow! Shit! God Dammit! Fuck it!

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (3)

25.
10/24/08

ANN
Whoa! Leslie!

They rush forward to help her, but she's gone --

LESLIE (O.C.)
Faaaaaaaaa!

Camera RUNS UP TO THE EDGE and we see LESLIE, covered in dirt, sprawled out on the ground.

ANN
Oh my God. Are you okay?

TOM
Let's ditch her. It'll be hilarious.

Ann stares at him in horror. Then Aubrey SNAPS A PHOTO.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. PIT - MOMENTS LATER

On the edge, Tom and Aubrey look through the digital photos on the little camera.

TOM

Hey, that's a good one. Email me that please.

AUBREY

She's dustier in this one.

TOM

I'll take that one too.

SPY SHOT: At the bottom of the pit, Ann is swabbing Leslie's cuts and shaking up a bag of chemical cold, applying Neosporin, etc.

ANN

Does it hurt a lot?

LESLIE

(in pain)
No.

ANN

Right.

LESLIE

How can you tell?

ANN

I'm a nurse.

LESLIE

Thank goodness I was wearing the hard hat.

ANN

But it fell off.

LESLIE

After my head hit that rod.

ANN

Well, you should be all set now. Hey, you shed blood for the cause. Now we're sisters.

Leslie smiles.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE
I've always wanted a sister.

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - LATER

Leslie sits on the couch next to Andy peeling off her torn stockings.

ANDY
I can't believe you fell in too. That's hilarious.

ANN
It's not "hilarious," Andy.

ANDY
It's pretty hilarious.

Leslie hands Ann back a hairbrush.

LESLIE
Thanks... Sis.

ANN
No sweat.

Leslie holds out her arms like a toddler, and Ann "helps" her stand up, which she is perfectly capable of doing.

LESLIE
Okay. I am going to show my boss, Ron Swanson, our findings, and demonstrate how dangerous this pit is. He'll have to listen to me, with a broken clavicle.

ANN
Nothing is broken.

LESLIE
Trust me, it's broken. Do you have one of those foam collar neck braces?

ANN
Seriously, you're fine.

Leslie mumbles that she is pretty sure it's broken, but doesn't have the guts to say it out loud.

ANN (CONT'D)
Hey -- this is really cool, that you're helping me with this.

LESLIE

Yes. Well, I'm a public servant. You're the public. It's my honor and pleasure to serve you.

Ann smiles.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Why don't you come by my office later -- we can talk about the project, maybe grab some Starbucks, maybe gab a little.

ANN

Sure. Why not.

ANN TALKING HEAD

ANN

I don't know. She's a little doofy, but she's sweet.
(shrugs)

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

I may have underestimated Ann. She's very dedicated to the cause, like I am. At first, I thought she was just a...well, I hate the word "bitch," it demeans women. I thought she was a bee-yotch. But now -- I wouldn't say she's my best friend, but we're very good friends, and getting better all the time.
(catches herself being nerdy)
And health care is a huge issue. A hot nurse can be a very powerful political symbol.

INT. RON SWANSON'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Leslie and Ron. SPY SHOT.

RON

Explain this again.

Angle on Leslie, who is wearing a travel neck pillow taped shut across her throat with duct tape.

LESLIE

I want a committee, Ron. I want to explore the possibility of putting a park on Lot 48.

(CONTINUED)

RON

Aw, that lot is zoned commercial. When the economy turns around, I'll have plenty of developers who would love to exploit that property. You were supposed to put this fire out.

LESLIE

Here's the thing, Ron. When you've been in the pit -- have you been in the pit?

RON

What? No.

LESLIE

Well, I have.

RON

When you fell in?

LESLIE

When I visited the bottom of the pit on a fact-finding mission. And when you're down in the pit... well, you really get perspective about what it all means.

Leslie starts laying out PHOTOS that Aubrey took -- the pit, Leslie posing by it, Leslie falling in...

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I've been a loyal soldier, Ron, but I want my shot. Give me lot 48.

(dramatic whisper)

Let me form a sub-committee, and explore the possibility of building a small park.

Ron stares at her, and realizes she has no real ammo here.

RON

I'll definitely think about it.

LESLIE

I like the sound of that "definitely."

Leslie triumphantly smiles to camera as she leaves. Behind her, Ron tosses the photos in the trash and resumes whatever he was doing.

RON TALKING HEAD

RON

I don't want this Parks Department to build a park because I don't believe in government.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RON (CONT'D)

I believe government is a waste of taxpayer money. My dream is to have the public park system privatized and run entirely for profit by corporations. McDonald's I think would be a good fit. Imagine a shiny clean McDonald's in every park. Corporations are so much cooler than government. Government is for nerds and minority women.

Jump Cut -- he is showing us around the office.

RON (CONT'D)

This office is a symbol of how I feel about government:

He points to a MACHINE GUN that's aimed at anyone who sits across from him.

RON SWANSON

This M-16 was given to me as a present by a prominent local gun dealer. I bought two and he threw in a third for free. People who come in to ask me for things have to stare right down the barrel.

It's mounted on his desk, pointing at the guest chair.

RON SWANSON (CONT'D)

What? The barrel's been concreted. I would have to pull out this plug for it to be fully operational.

He gestures to a MINE he keeps on his desk.

RON SWANSON (CONT'D)

This is a partially defused Claymore mine. I want to remind people that asking me for anything is a minefield.

He gestures to a coffee table made out of one of those massive SPIKED METAL TANK OBSTACLES.

RON SWANSON (CONT'D)

That's my crown jewel. It's called a "Czech Hedgehog," and it was used to keep Allied tanks off the beaches in France. It cost me eleven thousand dollars to ship it here. I had to have the floor reinforced. I like it.

(beat)

I think it's beautiful.

INT. LESLIE'S OFFICE - LATER

Mark stands outside in the common area. Ann approaches Aubrey. Mark glances at her. His eyes flicker away, and then immediately back. He stares at her from the side, without her noticing.

ANN

Hey, how's it going? Is Leslie around?

AUBREY

What is this regarding?

ANN

Aubrey, it's me. It's Ann, from the pit.

Aubrey nods blankly. Mark saunters over.

MARK

Lot 48, right? Sullivan Street?

(she nods)

I'm Mark, I'm a city planner.

ANN

Ann Logan. Hi.

MARK

So I want to tell you I have a lot of respect for community activists. You guys get dumped on so much, but you keep at it, organizing the poor, and giving people a voice and really keeping us honest in the government. Really cool work.

ANN

I agree, but I'm not a community activist. I'm a nurse.

MARK

I feel exactly the same way about nurses.

Ann smiles.

ANN

Really? Exactly the same way? How lucky for you that you didn't just make a really embarrassing mistake.

MARK

I know, right? Thank god.

(CONTINUED)

ANN

Who else do you completely respect and admire in exactly the same way? Animal trainers? Rental car phone reservation takers?

MARK

Yup. All of them.

She laughs.

MARK (CONT'D)

So why is a nurse "taking on the system?" What's in this for you?

ANN

Oh. Well, between you and me, I own all the nearby lots. I'm thinking if I can get the city to commit to fixing this, I can get it for a low price, bundle it with my lots, and put up a new mall.

MARK

(disappointed)

Wow. Okay.

ANN

I'm kidding. There's a hole in the ground, it's ugly and people are falling into it. That's all.

Mark smiles at her, intrigued.

MARK

I knew Leslie fell in. Tom emailed me a picture this morning. But who else?

ANN

...My boyfriend.

MARK

(not thrown)

He okay?

ANN

Yeah, he's fine. He's great.

MARK

What's he do for a living?

ANN

(wary)

Why do you want to know?

(CONTINUED)

MARK
Just making conversation.

ANN
He's a...musician. Potentially. I mean,
yeah -- whatever -- he's a musician.

Mark nods slightly. "That guy's not a threat." They hold
each other's gaze for a second. Leslie comes around the
corner.

LESLIE
There she is!
(re: Mark)
And there he is! There both of them are!

ANN
Hey Leslie!

They hug.

LESLIE
I take it you've met.

ANN
We have. How are you feeling?

LESLIE
I'm feeling...optimistic. Waiting for
news from "on high" about whether we get
our committee.

ANN
Hey -- no matter what happens, I want to
say thanks. I mean it. This is...way
better than I thought it would be. You're
really fighting for me.

Leslie beams.

LESLIE
Well. That's my job. You want a quick
tour?

ANN
Sure...I have to leave in half an hour...

They leave. Mark watches them go.

INT. RON SWANSON'S OFFICE - LATER

Mark walks in. SPY SHOT.

(CONTINUED)

RON
Are we meeting about something?

MARK
I want you to give Lot 48 to Leslie and
let her try to build a park.

Ron pauses and leans back in his chair. He casually swivels the gun on his desk to keep Mark in the sights. Mark picks up the Claymore mine and idly tosses it in the air. Ron stiffens.

RON
Why?

MARK
Doesn't matter. People like parks.

RON
It's a development lot. Restaurant,
office building, something.

MARK
You owe me one. Remember? In fact you
owe me several.

RON
You want to cash in for this?

MARK
Yup.

RON
What's your angle?

MARK
Doesn't matter.

Ron stares at him. Mark stares back. Unintimidated.

RON
Trading four years worth of favors for a
park that'll never get built. You've
gone soft.

Mark smiles and heads out. As he goes.

MARK
And tell her in the next 30 minutes.

He TOSSES RON the mine. Ron stares after him, thinking.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - LATER

Leslie and Ann carry Starbucks coffee cups and walk down a VERY LONG HALLWAY that connects the Parks Department with the elevator area. It is lined with columns and arches. They land at the very end, where the elevators are.

LESLIE

There are 85,000 people in Pawnee, and this building contains the entire government. "The Power Center."

ANN

This hallway is endless.

LESLIE

I know. We call it "Archway Alley." Or sometimes just: "The Hall."

ANN

Clever.

PAN slowly over a MURAL PAINTING in the elevator area, of a hard-working, tough as nails prairie woman...

LESLIE

The building is called Pioneer Hall, named by the first inhabitants of this building in 1891.

We see the pioneer woman is holding an ax and must be in the middle of her daily wood chopping.

ANN

(re: mural)

Wow.

LESLE (V.O.)

Yes -- our crown jewel. These murals depict the battle of Conega Creek.

We pan down and see the pioneer woman is actually swinging her ax at the head of a Native American woman.

LESLIE

We put the minimum wage poster over the most horrible parts.

A minimum wage poster is covering up what must be even worse scenes of slaughter.

ANN

That's...horrifying.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE

Yes. Come on -- I'll show you the DMV
offices!

ANN

Awesome.

From ALL THE WAY BACK DOWN THE HALL, Tom pops out and calls
to them.

TOM

Hey! Leslie! We did it!

They look back at him.

INT. PARKS DEPARTMENT OFFICE -- LATER

Leslie and Ann hugging. Tom tries to get in on hugging Ann,
who politely obliges, then wiggles away.

LESLIE (V.O.)

Yes, Ron Swanson has approved our request
for a committee!

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE

So exciting. This is my first committee,
that I'll have headed by myself. Or with
someone. First committee, ever, of any
kind, for me. But...wow. I mean, in
terms of my future? This is huge. I'm
barely 34, and I've already landed a
Parks Department exploratory sub-
committee!

(jazzed)

I'm a rocketship.

BACK TO OFFICE

Leslie, Ann, Tom and others stand around drinking champagne.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

To our beautiful new committee, a
committee of dreams! And to America!

Leslie drains a glass like it's apple juice .

TOM

Here let me.

He pours another. She downs it too. Tom marvels.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

Leslie gets hammered a couple times a month. It's the only way I can tolerate her.

BACK TO SCENE

Mark comes in.

MARK

Hey -- just heard the news.
Congratulations.

LESLIE

Thank you. It's very exciting. Do you think I should call a press conference right away? Try to get my picture out there? Or no -- I should wait. Don't want to overplay my hand. Okay. Good. So. Stay! Have a glass of champagne!

Mark glances at Ann.

MARK

Why not.

Leslie goes to get him a glass. Mark motions to Tom.

MARK (CONT'D)

Hey.
(motions to Ann)
What's the story?

TOM

Don't bother. She's ice cold. I already took a run at her and got nowhere.

MARK

Well, maybe you'll do better tonight, with your wife.

TOM

Dude, why you gotta be like that?

Leslie sidles up to Mark, fueled by liquid courage.

LESLIE

Well well well. Looks like you and I are going to be working together.

Tom rolls his eyes and walks off.

(CONTINUED)

MARK
Looks like it.

LESLIE
Looks like it indood. Deed. Doo-dee-doo-dee-doo.

She sips and winces at her drunkenness. Ann walks over.

ANN
Cheers!

They all clink glasses. Leslie puts her hand on Ann's shoulder.

LESLIE
Ann, I promise you -- I am going to work my butt off to get this project done. No matter how long it takes. This butt is coming off!

Ann smiles.

MARK
That's our Leslie. She's one tough bird.

He tousles her hair -- Leslie leans into it with a smile. He stops and a second later Leslie opens her eyes. She flashes the thumb's up to Ann.

LESLIE AND ANN - JOINT TALKING HEAD

With a glass of champagne, a little tipsy.

LESLIE
America is a funny place. It's full of opportunities, full of hope, full of small towns and big cities and real people and delicious beverages and hot guys. You just never know, in America, when opportunity is going to strike.
(to Ann)
Are you excited?

ANN
Definitely. I'm fired up.

LESLIE
Yeah!

ANN
I've always heard that democracy, or whatever, only works if people get involved. Well, I'm getting involved!

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE

That's right.

(singing)

"Soul sistah, soul sistah, soul sistah!"

She drinks more champagne as Ann gets riled up.

ANN

I'm a nurse, you know? People come into
the E.R. with chopped off fingers and
compound fractures--

LESLIE

Like me, with my clavicle!

ANN

-- sure -- and if I can handle real blood
and guts, I can handle this. I'm making
a vow here. No matter what, I'm going to
get that pit filled in, even if it takes
two months!

(beat; notices something off-
camera)

What? What's so funny?

LESLIE

(downs champagne)

Whoooooooooooo!

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. PARKS DEPARTMENT OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Leslie, Tom, Ann.

LESLIE

At first the committee will just be the three of us and Mark. We'll have our meetings on Ann's days off. Now -- what to call the committee?

TOM

The Sub-Committee for a Better Tomorrow.

LESLIE

Too vague. That could be about anything.

TOM

The Sub-Committee for Improving Our Nation's...Tomorrows.

LESLIE

Better...

ANN

Why can't it just be, like, "The Committee to Fill In the Pit?"

LESLIE

The name is crucial. It has to inspire confidence in taxpayers. "The Tennessee Valley Authority." Man, don't you just want to give your money to that? Aren't you happy that exists?

(thinks)

How about "The Extraordinary Sub-Committee on Pit Enhancement?"

ANN

That sounds like we're making it bigger.

LESLIE

Pit Fixing? Fixation? Pit Betterment.

TOM

Pit Beautification?

LESLIE

Pit Beautification.

(shaking imaginary hand)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Untitled Daniels/Schur Project

First Network Draft

41.

10/24/08

CONTINUED:

LESLIE (CONT'D)

"Hi, Leslie Knope, Executive Director of the Departmental Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee for Pit Beautification." Boy, that sounds good.

END OF SHOW

